

Civic Engagement Update

Inside this update:

SERVES Member Sessions Review	2
SERVES Supervisor Session Overview	2
WSC C.E. Support	3
SERVES Café Summary	3
How C.E. Supports Training	4
Scheduling C.E.	4
Reminders	4

Contribute to the Civic Engagement Updates

Share your success stories and pictures with the rest of the WSC! Do you have tips on the C.E. process? We want to hear them! Please send all stories, pictures, tips and suggestions to Donna Olson at dolson@esd.wa.gov.

The Civic Engagement Atlas & Additional Resources to Support C.E.



One of the priorities we have for this year is to build more resources for the C.E. Atlas. When completed, the Atlas materials will be available online so that each project can organize their Atlas binder to best suit their needs.

The resources available in the Atlas will provide how-

to's and in-depth information on a wide variety of topics associated with using the *Roadmap*. It will include facilitation guides for both members and youth: learning styles, incorporating a train the trainer aspect to member facilitation, and working with middle-school aged youth. Other topics will include finding and working with youth partners, acquiring funds and supplies, and supplemental activities and resources.

During SERVES a few technical assistance needs were mentioned, and we were not able to cover all of them within this update. However, in response to those requests the guides

for finding and working with youth partners and acquiring funding and supplies will be developed as a first priority.

Since organizing the online portion of the Atlas will take some time, the finished documents will be available by email request for those who would like assistance as quickly as possible.

Any resources created will also be attached to the C.E. updates as they are completed.

If you have another need that you think the Atlas could address most effectively, please contact Donna Olson. Our goal is to develop a resource to support your success.

The Proof is in the Parchment

A Success Story by Don Young, VISTA Leader at ESD 101

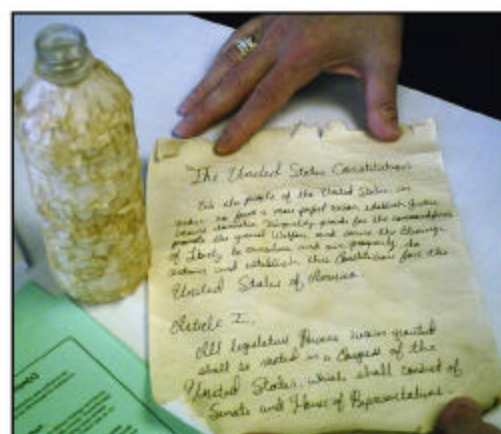
When working with a group of middle school kids you always have to wonder if you're getting through to them. That age group can come up with the wildest ideas — for example: building a swimming pool for the dogs at the pound.

When going through the *Roadmap to Civic Engagement*, the chance to give a lesson in civics is just too great to pass up. The idea that you can teach them about the Constitution and the power of the vote is right there, but you often wonder if they "get it."

One group that we worked with was especially tough (or perhaps I

should say strong willed), but they finally chose a project and followed through to the celebration. They even filled out their assessments. But did we make any headway?

About a week later one of the boys who was giving everyone a bad time came up to me. He thanked me for teaching him about the Constitution and said that he had a gift for me. He and his dad had worked on a project over the weekend. They had taken a pop bottle and covered it with masking tape and dipped it in cola to make it look aged. What was inside made me realize that we can and do make a difference. They had taken a



piece of parchment paper, burnt the edges, and written out the Preamble to the Constitution in longhand.

After I choked back some tears I think I realized that we are making some inroads in at least one boy's ideas about civic engagement.

CE Member Workshops at SERVES: A Quick Review

Team representatives were chosen to attend one of two member workshops offered to support the *Roadmap to Civic Engagement* orientation during the October SERVES:

- 1) Introduction to the *Roadmap to Civic Engagement*—53 members!
- 2) Facilitating the *Roadmap to Civic Engagement with Youth*—41 members!

There was also an optional CE Café Workshop Session 3 offered which resulted in some fruitful discussion notes included in this update.

Session 1 (Intro) focused on exploring the history and purpose of CE, curriculum goals, specific unit goals and themes, flexibility to adapt the curriculum, preparing to facilitate with your team (Unit 1), engaging members in a curriculum developed specifically for middle-school aged youth, and some question and answer time.

Some great tips were brainstormed for preparing to facilitate Unit 1 with your team:

- Read through the curriculum AND the Introduction. The Introduction has helpful background and context.
- Review the activities and determine if they will work for

your group and space available.

- Make sure you have prepared all needed supplies and have done any preparation with supplies necessary (things cut out, copied, etc.)
- Know your facilitation team and their styles and preferences
- Know your team well—comfort levels, learning styles, abilities, etc.
- Practice!

Session 2 (Facilitating with Youth) focused on some of the same foundational topics as Session 1. Session 2 then focused more on preparing to facilitate with youth groups: maintaining youth voice, service project planning with youth, and facilitating the assessment.

Some similar tips were brainstormed related to facilitating Unit 1 with Youth:

- Read through the curriculum and Introduction—pull out the main points and goals. Make sure that you can communicate the desired outcomes with youth.
- Have some energizer and icebreaker activities in your back pocket to keep momentum and energy going at needed times.
- Know the group you are working with: who are they, do they know

each other, how large is the group, what ages, abilities and learning styles?

- Prepare materials and supplies.
- Put some notes on your agenda to follow; be aware of time limits and rehearse!
- Come with enthusiasm and a positive attitude!

Ideas on maintaining youth voice that were discussed included:

- Keep your personal opinion to a minimum if shared at all.
- Make it known to the youth that you are there for THEM.
- Help forward youth voice, follow-up may happen later (a project idea or community need to be addressed). Be an ally for youth with people that have power when necessary.
- Let the youth talk; pause to allow for silence and other voices.

More tips about maintaining youth ownership will in the next update.



CE Supervisor Workshop at SERVES: A Quick Overview

A New Supervisor's Orientation to the *Roadmap to Civic Engagement* was provided during Session 6 of the October SERVES. All Project Supervisors were invited, new Project Supervisors were required to attend, and we were pleased to host a total of 16 supervisors for the session.

The Supervisor agenda included a look at the history and purpose of the *Roadmap*, overall structure of the *Roadmap*, an overview of the units and tips from experienced Supervisors for each unit, curriculum flexibility and adaptation

guidelines and tips for introducing CE to your team.

Roadmap Curriculum Adaptation Guidelines and **Roadmap Adaptation Submission Form** is attached to this update for your use with your Program Coordinator.

Also attached is a handout regarding **Debriefing Each Unit as a Team** which can help enrich the member experience as adult learners and "train the trainers."

Experienced Supervisors brought some great ideas to share with others and we will highlight these

throughout the year in these updates. An overview is attached.

Based on some feedback and discussions with both members and Supervisors, we are looking at the possibility of hosting a "Finding a Youth Partner" optional workshop at the March SERVES. We will find a way to provide further technical assistance regarding this topic regardless as a priority. We are also looking into offering more open space workshops for Supervisors and/or members to share ideas related to activities and facilitation of each unit.

The Evolving Roles of the C.E. Leader and WSC Staff in Supporting C.E.

~ Carolyn Benard, Program Coordinator

As many of you are aware, the roles of the Washington Service Corps staff and the WSC Leader in support of the civic engagement (C.E.) initiative are evolving. This is in an effort to improve program sustainability and available technical assistance.

Program coordinators are assuming many of the daily technical assistance responsibilities related to the implementation of *The Roadmap to Civic Engagement*. Program Coordinators are collecting and aggregating CE monthly report information and are responsible for approving alternative activities proposed for the *Roadmap*. Please approach your program coordinator first with questions related to CE. We are working together as a staff to provide consistent and effective support.

Donna's role as the C.E. leader is also evolving. The curriculum has been around since 2002 and it is our

hope that projects are becoming more familiar with it and able to institutionalize it within their program operations and annual training plan. The Leader's role is shifting from providing the direct service of facilitating parts of the curriculum to being available as a facilitation coach for both supervisors and members.

As the C.E. leader, Donna is still able to conduct site visits which will focus more on collecting feedback from supervisors and members. Donna is available to attend the service projects and visit during Unit 7 facilitation. If there is time available, it would be extremely useful if she could debrief the process and collect feedback as a part of Unit 7. All site visits will be coordinated with Program Coordinators supporting the team. Please contact Donna if you are interested in setting up a site visit.

Since many of the daily technical

assistance needs are shifting to Program Coordinators, the Leader's focus is able to shift towards creating additional resources for project supervisors such as these updates and the C.E. Atlas (see pg. 1). These updates will be sent out bimonthly and will focus on celebrating our successes and addressing technical assistance needs. We may also attach additional resources created for the C.E. Atlas.

If you would like additional clarification on the support available to you from the WSC, please contact your Program Coordinator. Thank you for your support of these shifting roles and responsibilities.



Café participants from left: Jen Hewett, Mary Granger, and Don Young.

What was discussed during the Roadmap Café at SERVES? (Part 1)

A small group of people gathered together with a specific goal in mind: discuss civic engagement. We did not utilize the Café model in its traditional form due to the small size of our group. We did, however, follow the *principles* of a Café discussion. Since the discussion was rather in-depth, we will continue with Café summary notes in future updates.

The session began with a name game and an overview of the Conversation Café model. Then questions were brainstormed. The final list of six questions covered a wide range of topics. They were:

- What does it mean to be civically engaged?
- How do we involve everyone in our society?
- How do we help all youth find a

voice during the process?

- How do you move from identifying issues to understanding them?
- How do you preserve the desire to be civically engaged after the process?
- How can you deal with the repetition of the *Roadmap* effectively? What are some good alternative activities to use?

The opening question was: *What does it mean to be civically engaged?* The discussion began by reviewing the *Roadmap* definition which brought up another major discussion point for our group: *is civic participation a duty or a choice?*

This question was revisited many times throughout the discussion. An initial point was that while the *Roadmap* mentions duty, engagement is not always treated as a duty in our society.

Rather, it often seems to be viewed as a choice. Furthermore, that choice often seems passive because so many people do not realize they are making the choice to be engaged. It was also noted that some people make an active choice not to be engaged for a variety of reasons. However, the discussion focused more on the reasons behind the passive choice.

How did our society come to the point of seeming to have so little engagement? Several common barriers to participating in voting were identified: the feeling that our vote doesn't matter, not feeling informed enough to vote, and the legalese used on ballots. It was also noted that for many people struggling to meet their basic needs, it's extremely difficult just to fit in the time necessary to participate.



Reminders

- ♦ If you haven't started looking for your youth partner yet, you should get started soon.
- ♦ All alternative activities not currently in the *Roadmap* need WSC Program Coordinator approval **prior** to use.
- ♦ Don't forget to leave time during Unit 7 to facilitate assessments! **All** participants (members and youth) need to complete the assessment.
- ♦ **All** members need to be involved in the youth facilitation or project in some way. It may not be directly facilitating with the youth group, but they should assist with the process or project in some way.
- ♦ C.E. is fun!

How C.E. Can Support Member Training

Going through the civic engagement process can provide many opportunities for additional training for AmeriCorps members. Some skill-building is built into the process, but there are opportunities to take this further, enhancing the member experience and helping build additional professional skills.

First and foremost, the C.E. process is a chance for members to build group facilitation skills. Many projects have members facilitate portions of the curriculum to the rest of the team, and at least a few members will be facilitating for youth. If your project doesn't already do a training specifically about group facilitation skills, doing this training before members start C.E. not only increases their chances of success with the *Roadmap* but gives them a professional skill that is valuable in almost any field they want to

pursue after AmeriCorps.

Trainings on service-learning and learning styles can also help build skills around facilitation that will enhance the experience for both members and youth. For some projects, this type of training is also directly related to their service.

Project planning skills are also necessary to successfully complete the *Roadmap*. Danielle Bonner, supervisor for Federal Way Public Schools, shared that the Federal Way team will be incorporating an additional training specifically on project planning skills this year. For large teams or service projects, this kind of additional training can increase the likelihood that members will feel empowered to make a difference after they're finished with both the process and their service.

Youth empowerment is a

major focus of the *Roadmap*. For your members doing direct facilitation with youth, a youth voice or youth empowerment training can help increase the impact of the process.

These additional trainings can all support the AmeriCorps training requirements in various ways. Facilitation skills can support the communication requirement, while most of the others apply to the Life after AmeriCorps requirement. The process itself also supports the teambuilding training requirement.

Since working these opportunities into your team's civic engagement process will also fulfill other AmeriCorps training requirements, this can support working to schedule trainings, additional service projects, and team meetings throughout the program year.

Scheduling Civic Engagement: When Teams Get Started

Deciding when to schedule C.E. can be challenging when looking at how to balance training requirements, team meetings, and additional service projects. Knowing that you need to get member training done with enough time left for members to facilitate with youth requires effective pre-planning.

Currently, there are about three different points in the program year that are most common for teams to start C.E.:

- 1) **During the initial Orientation period.** This can help with early team-building as well as orient members to what may be a new community and its resources.
- 2) **Shortly after SERVES in late October or early November.** It can be nice to start here when members are feeling more settled into their sites. It can be especially beneficial if the members required to attend the C.E. workshops at SERVES are taking leadership roles with your team.

- 3) **The beginning of January.** The team-building can be useful again for teams that have not met together for awhile due to the holidays. However, this leaves less time to complete the entire process, so you may want to have a youth partner identified already if you will be starting after the holidays.

All three times to start have their advantages, and it's important to schedule C.E. with what will work best for your team.

